Comedy for Us, Tragedy for the Greeks, P. 2

We Don't Recall Washington and His Generals Running Night Clubs On The Side

"Except for the Continental Army of our earliest years, never before in history has a young military force been subjected to such a challenge."

—Gen. Westmoreland praising Marshal Ky and his forces at the Waldorf-Astoria April 24.

"Ky himself has moderated his playboy activity, but it is common knowledge in Saigon that he has kept a table permanently reserved at Maxim's, an elegant Saigon night club owned by ARVN [Army Republic Viet Nam] Generals, where a single drink costs more ($3) than a peasant earns in a week. An exceptionally moral people, the Vietnamese often refer to Ky, in private, as Cao Boi (cowboy)."

—John Mecklin's new report from Saigon in Fortune *for April. He was chief U.S. press officer there in 1962-64.*

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The Mindless Momentum of A Runaway Military Machine

The central thesis of Gen. Westmoreland's debut on the home front is the oldest alibi of frustrated Generals—they could have won the war if it hadn't been for those unpatriotic civilians back home. This was how the Kaiser's ex-Generals consoled themselves over their beers after World War I and this was the soothing syrup the French Generals spooned up after Dienbienphu. But the former lost the war despite all their monocled splendor because they invited exactly what they had always told themselves they ought to avoid—a war on two fronts, against France and Russia at the same time. The latter lost because their perpetual talk of how they were really winning, when year after year they were losing the finest cadres of the French officer class in the Indochinese morass, finally made the French people realize their Generals were first class liars and their dirty little colonial war not worth the cost. Both cases provide obvious parallels in our own predicament, headed as we are for that major war on the Asian mainland we were always told to avoid, and led by Generals who have claimed to be winning ever since 1961, and still claim it, though, as Westmoreland also said, they see no end in sight! We wonder what kind of logic they teach them at West Point.

What Freedom, Gen. Westmoreland?

"They [our troops] know that they are helping to stop the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia and to give the people of South Vietnam a freedom of choice."

—Gen. Westmoreland at the Waldorf April 24

"All media are controlled or heavily censored. Radio and TV belong to the government. . . . The gaps in the front pages of Saigon's newspapers are constant and sometimes laughable. . . . The Saigon Guardian, an English language paper, was closed four months ago by junta order. Its editor, Ton That Thien, who writes frequently for the London Economist and the Manchester Guardian was director of public relations at one time in the Diem government. He finds it difficult to understand the U.S. attitude toward press repression in Saigon. 'We only had 7000 circulation,' he told me. 'We were the only paper even slightly critical of Ky and the Generals'."

—Hunton Downs, assistant to the editor of the Honolulu Advertiser, *from Saigon April 14.*

Is the Enemy Discouraged?

The heart of Gen. Westmoreland's opening speech at the AP luncheon came when he said the enemy was "discouraged by repeated military defeats" but hanging on because "encouraged by what he believes to be popular opposition to our efforts in Vietnam." One does not need to be a military expert to question this assessment. From the enemy point of view, they are doing far better than they had a right to expect. An undeveloped nation of 30,000,000 people, with little industry of their own, has defied the world's greatest military power for six years. The rebels have grown from a handful to a formidable army despite (or perhaps because of) the constant stepup in our bombardment North and South. In recent months a whole series of enormously expensive and glamorously named U.S. military sweeps have done little but tear swaths in the jungle. While our casualties have risen sharply, the enemy has managed to elude us, and to strike back at times and places of his own choosing. We are switching troops from the Mekong Delta to handle a swiftly deteriorating military situation in the northern part of South Vietname. It is no secret that Westmoreland wants more troops and that we are going to need a limited mobilization to get them. Add the billion dollar losses of our air war, and the growing difficulties of the no longer almighty dollar, as the mounting costs of this "little war" undermines it, and ask yourself whether the other side may not feel downright exuberant, indeed overconfident.

Let us put the case in the most hard-boiled terms. The United States can win this war in Vietnam *if* it is prepared to put in a million men, or more, and then to slug it out patiently year after year until the guerrillas are worn down. It can win if it deliberately de-escalates the firepower and meets the guerrillas on their own terms, in close combat, instead of alienating the entire population with indiscriminate artillery and airpower. A nation of 30,000,000 cannot defeat a nation of 200,000,000 if the bigger nation cares enough to pay the price of victory and has the patience to pursue it. The key is *patience,* and patience is what the United States

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Adenauer's Real Function In Postwar West Germany

How The U.S. Plays Out A Banana Republic Comedy in Greece

A capsule history would say that German capitalism gambled on Hitler and fell back in defeat on Adenauer. It succeeded (with the help of its opposite numbers in U.S. finance and industry) in regaining power behind the facade of a Republic as far to the right as was feasible. To head it West Germany's masters found in Adenauer as authoritarian a figure as ever presided over a parliamentary system. John Foster Dulles, lifelong counsel for German big business interests and an apologist for Nazi expansion turned up to mold U.S. policy in their favor after the war. He and Adenauer became the Siamese twins of the cold war, a continuation in new guise of Hitler's holy war against Communism. Two major decisions set West Germany's course. In 1949 Adenauer turned to the right, including the far right, rather than to the Social Democrats for the votes he needed to become Chancellor. In 1952 he rejected Soviet proposals for a unified but neutral Reich with an army of its own and chose instead the road of division and NATO. Perhaps the best that can be said of Adenauer was that he was slightly less unlovely than his equally rigid and humorless old antagonist, Ulbricht.

Charade in Greece

Greece, the first "frontier of freedom" in the cold war and its starting point, is like West Germany another example of the U.S. tendency to restore the Old Order, or as close a simulacrum as possible, under cover of fighting Communism. There the U.S., the world's oldest republic, has been doing its best to maintain Europe's last *un*constitutional monarchy. U.S. propaganda pictures the Greek monarchy as a unifying force between the politically turbulent Greeks, but its record is one of rightist intrigue. When the monarchy was restored in 1935 after 11 years of republicanism, the King, the present one's Uncle, proceeded within a few months to impose a military-Fascist dictatorship on the country which lasted until the Axis invaded in World War II. The pattern seems now to be repeating itself. The monarchist oligarchy ruled Greece with U.S. help until the elections of 1963-64 gave Papandreou's new middle class liberal Center Union an absolute majority. But the King soon forced him out of office when Papandreou tried to end the system which made the Army officer class the tool of the throne and the preserve of a rightist upper class. Months of intrigue and tension were to have ended with new elections May 28 but the Army has seized power for fear that Papandreou would win them.

One has to be pretty credulous to believe that this coup was pulled off without consulting the King, the U.S. military mission and the CIA. Our guess is that they decided to preserve the appearance of royal detachment. It is reported here that the U.S. Ambassador, in this well-planned charade, even warned the military the U.S. would break off relations if they dethroned the King! There are no reports that we threatened U.S. action unless the Constitution were restored.

Bouquets, Bombs and Brickbats

WE CONGRATULATE the faculty and students of Catholic University for their victory in forcing the retention of Father Charles E. Curran as a professor of theology and in making Cardinal Spellman and the other trustees back down in this opening struggle for more academic freedom in Catholic colleges.

WE CONDEMN the Tito government for its cowardice in imposing four more years of prison on the writer Mihajlo Mihajlov. What moral significance is left in Tito's revolt against Stalin if a Yugoslav writer cannot tell the truth about Stalinism without falling afoul of the Soviet Embassy in Belgrade and his own government? Mihajlov is a martyr in the struggle to restore freedom of opinion in the Soviet bloc.

WE ENDORSE the appeal by Rabbi Abraham L. Feinberg to the West European Communist leaders at the European Communist Conference April 24-27 in Czechoslovakia to save Soviet Jewry from cultural extinction. Rabbi Feinberg was recently in Hanoi with the late A. J. Muste and Pastor Martin Niemoeller. The Soviet Union prides itself on cultural autonomy for its diverse peoples, but denies this to Russian Jewry. It is a black mark on the USSR that a community which was able, under Czarism, to produce so rich a culture in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian, is being asphyxiated by prejudice and hostility.

De Gaulle Knuckles Under to the U.S. and Bans the Russell War Crimes Trial

Jean-Paul Sartre, chairman of the Russell war crimes tribunal, wrote General de Gaulle April 13 to protest the refusal of a French visa to Vladimir Dedijer, who was to preside over a session of the tribunal opening on April 26. The General's reply, the text of which was published April 24 in Le Figaro, finally shuts the doors of France to this war crimes trial.

De Gaulle addresses Sartre as "Mon cher Maitre." The letter is written with that distinction for which de Gaulle is famous. Yet it must make his admirers blush. It admits the views held by the organizers are close to the official French position on Vietnam. De Gaulle says he does not question the motives of Lord Russell and his collaborators. But he does not think their moral weight enhanced by assuming the robes of a court. He says he cannot permit an ally like the U.S. to be the object of so extravagant a proceeding on French soil. It is not for me to teach you," de Gaulle writes Sartre, "that all justice, in its principles as in its execution, belongs only to the State." This is not how the men of the Resistance felt.

De Gaulle denies that freedom of expression is involved. But the fact is that under U.S. pressure the doors of one country after another in "the free world" have been closed to the Tribunal. If its pretensions are as ludicrous as the U.S. claims, why is Washington so fearful of allowing it to proceed? The fact is that our conduct in Vietnam, North and South, cries out for examination in the light of the principles we established at Nuremberg. If any other big power were doing to any other small power, what we are doing to Vietnam, the roar of condemnation here would be overwhelming. I wish there were a more august tribunal to try the charges, but this is the only one there is. We're glad Sweden will give the Tribunal a home. Our country which invoked a decent respect for the opinion of mankind in setting forth its declaration of independence, now fears that same opinion. As well it should.

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Behind the New Reports of Starvation in the Rural South

How the Surplus Food and Food Stamp Programs Have Been Hobbled

By Robert Sherrill *

For 16 months Congressmen have been going into the Deep South and returning with reports of starvation. First, it was New York's Joe Resnick, in December 1965. He wrote Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman and President Johnson of "terrible" conditions; but nothing happened. This month Sen. Joseph Clark and his anti-poverty subcommittee went to Mississippi and found blacks living on rice and soybeans. So what else is new? Gene Roberts, writing in the *New York Times*, Feb. 6, 1966, told of eating with a family of 11 on the Delta who were surviving on "pork neckbone, water, syrup, and 'flourbread'." Freeman, responding to Clark's report as if this were the first he had heard of such things, now has a study team in the South.

Where the Fault Is Freeman's

More might be expected from Freeman if the starvation conditions had not been created in the first place by him and the Southerners who run the farm committees in Congress.

The federal food stamp program requires impoverished people to pay a part, which is sometimes impossible. Families with no income—and they are common on the Mississippi Delta, where unemployment runs between 60 and 90 percent —must pay $2 a person (maximum $12 a family) to get bonus stamps. It's a good deal: $12 in stamps can be traded for $70 in food. But where does a "broke" Negro get $12? For months, Freeman's own Civil Rights Advisory Committee has been trying to persuade him to drop the minimum to 50 cents a head, but he refuses, just as he has refused to use the emergency provisions of USDA Sect. 32, which for 30 years have given the secretary the authority to give free food to poor people anywhere.

Instead, Freeman has crimped. The distribution of surplus commodities (flour, cheese, oats, whatever the farmers had too much of) is still the system in some areas. When counties shifted to the food stamp program (stamps good for any food on the shelf), sometimes up to 39 percent of the needy had to drop out. (Freeman lobbied against permitting both programs to operate in the same county.) In eight counties that switched from surplus to stamps, 36,000 needy did not have the $2 a head to go along. So they go hungry.

Now there is a new threat. Rep. Poage of Texas, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, is pushing legislation requiring the states to put up 20 percent of the cost of bonus food. Poage's district doesn't have the stamp program, and the same is true of 15 other committeemen's districts. If it gets through Congress, few of the 41 states now in the program are expected to stay in.

The purpose of the forced hunger is obvious: The whites want the Negroes to move out. Field hands are in oversupply everywhere. Mississippi conditions are good, compared to some other states. All Mississippi counties have some food program, but South Carolina allows stamps in only 10 of 32 counties and it gives away no surplus commodities.

You can't keep 'em down on the farm when they are starving. Mississippi lost 40 percent of its tenant farmers between 1959 and 1964, and since then the rate of exodus has not diminished. A Congress that won't overrule Freeman and the Dixiecrats will get its payoff in the slums next summer and for many summers.

*Author of that newly published acid and ribald portrait of Lyndon Johnson, "The Accidental President."

Just Soul Brothers on Surplus Food

"You know, I have a colored friend down home who gets commodities. He does not care anything about that powdered milk they give him. He does not like it. So, you know who he gives it to? He gives it to me. We like it. He gets some dried beans every now and then—the same kind that goes into the bean soup in the House Restaurant. He says he does not eat those beans. You know who he gives them to? He brings them to my house. He says, 'Would you like to have these because if you don't want them I am going to throw them away anyhow.' Well, he gets so much cheese . . . every now and then he brings that to me."

—Rep. John Bell Williams (Miss) on the surplus food program, House speech, Feb. 9, 1966.

The Agriculture Dept. More Concerned With Farm Profits Than Hungry People

"Where there is no existing food program, we urge that one be inaugurated immediately with USDA Section 32, OEO or funds from the President's emergency budget or other source. . . . As the stamp law was written, a county could not have both a commodity and a stamp program except in an emergency. In areas where income levels are so low as to preclude the purchase of stamps, an emergency should be declared, under Section 4 (b) of Public Law 88-525 and direct distribution of surplus commodities be re-established alongside the food stamp program until corrective action has been taken.

"USDA charges a minimum of $2 per month for stamps for one person up to a maximum of $12 a month for a family of six or more. In Congressional consideration of the bill it was made clear, explicitly, that food stamps could and would be given free where there was lack of income. The USDA has disregarded this legislative history and banned all free stamps. . . .

"We urge that the administration of the direct food and food stamp and school lunch programs be transferred to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare . . . the basic orientation of the program should be in the direction of nutrition and not for subsidizing agricultural producers. The Department of Agriculture, bound as it is and has been by its primary responsibility to commercial agricultural producers, restricted by laws aimed at prices rather than nutrition, and strongly influenced by the geographical makeup of the Congressional committees which control its authorizations and appropriations has piled up a record which leaves a great deal to be desired. . . .

"It is an immense irony that while most of us eat so well and so cheaply, several million of our fellow citizens suffer not just from inadequate diets but even from actual hunger."

—Internal report on which Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty based its recommendations of April 4, 1967.

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"If the Northern Hemisphere Is Not to Go Up in Smoke"

(Continued from Page One)

lacks. It is not just the signs of popular opposition to the war which encourages the other side. It is the visible impatience. Even our hawks don't like the war and want to get it over with as quickly as possible. For us the war is a nuisance. For them the war is a matter of life-and-death. They are prepared to die for their country. We are prepared to die for our country too—if it were attacked—but not for the mere pleasure of destroying theirs. This is why they have the advantage of morale, and for this General Dynamics cannot provide a substitute.

The Same Self-Deception

Self-deception has been the characteristic of our leadership in this war from its beginning. Self-deception is still the key to Westmoreland's presentation. Even after so many years he still refuses to recognize the popular roots of the Vietnamese rebellion. He prefers to see it as something essentially artificial and imposed, which Hanoi can turn off on some magic spigot. First we were going to end the war by bombing Hanoi, but now that we'll soon be running out of meaningful targets in the North, we are in effect promised a quick victory if only we can bomb Berkeley into submission. The General who couldn't defeat the enemy abroad now returns to take it out on the *peaceniks* at home. Our country, he says, is founded on debate. But now, though we may be blundering toward a world war, we are told that debate is treasonable. The greatest issue in our country's history must be decided by momentum and default. Our Generals would like to suppress peace sentiment here as they do in Saigon. Free discussion is to be made suspect.

A "high government source" told an equally anonymous *Baltimore Sun* (April 21) reporter (we suspect it was Johnson himself talking to his friend Philip Potter), the U.S. had to avoid the buildup of a war psychology at home and conduct the Vietnamese war "rather coldly" because our power is so "beyond comprehension" that we mustn't let it got out of hand "if the Northern hemisphere is not to go up in smoke." This is the awful truth a solemn joint session of Congress ought to hear. Yet Johnson is doing what his better judgment tells him not to. Westmoreland is stepping up war fever at home while abroad the wraps are taken off Hanoi, Haiphong and the Mig air bases in a way which brings nearer that final confrontation with China and perhaps also the Soviet Union. As Senator McGovern told a *Washington Post* reporter (April 26) after a brilliant and courageous Senate attack on the growing war madness, "They [i.e. Johnson and the Generals] are really going for broke." As the fog of war closes in, and the drums beat louder, which is patriotism, which is love of country, to fall silent or to try and speak some sobering word?.

Westmoreland and the AP: Civilian Casualties

"But civilian casualties do not result from indiscriminate use of our firepower. They are caused by mechanical failure or human error. This is in sharp contrast to the Vietcong policy of calculated attacks on civilians. . . . During the last nine years, 53,000 Vietnamese—a large share of them teachers, policemen, and elected or natural leaders—have been killed OR KIDNAPPED. [Our emphasis.]"

—Westmoreland: AP lunch in the Waldorf April 24

"In the South where the enemy deliberately mixes with the population, a massive toll is taken among civilians by artillery and aircraft. There are estimates that up to 5,000 casualties die each month, with 10,000 wounded. . . . The American command estimates that up to 40,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regulars have been slain this year alone. But the figure is known to contain a large number of civilians. After a battle, all the dead other than allied troops are counted as enemy, even women and children."

—Full page survey based on a dozen of its correspondents by the AP on the eve of the Manila conference, Milwaukee Journal *(and many other papers) Oct. 24.*

According to Westmoreland's figures, the VC have killed **or kidnapped** 53,000 civilians in 9 years, or not quite 6,000 a year. According to the AP's figures, we kill almost that many every month.

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